



Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition (AYHSC)

Minutes – April 11, 2013

4:30-6:00pm

Whittemore Robbins House

670 Mass Ave.

- I. Welcome and Youth Introductions:** Karen Dillon, Cindy Starks, Kathy Hirsch, Judith Carroll, Mary DeCoursey, Rebecca Wolfe, Carlene Newell, Joe Curro, Christine Connolly, Jack Flood, Rich Flynn, Lynn Horgan; Youth Advisors- Lilli Zigo, Sarah Kiernan, and Erika Tai.

Karen Dillon welcomed the new youth advisors to the meeting. Each of the students shared a little bit about their background, extracurricular/volunteer experience and thoughts about the Coalition. Coalition members enthusiastically welcomed the students and took turns sharing their hopes for student involvement. The overall tone of this exchange involved working together to better understand youth perspectives and concerns, as well as ideas for how the Coalition can work with youth to influence healthy choices

- II. One on One Reflections-** Cindy Starks reminded members that she will be collecting feedback on community conversations and requested this information come to her via email (cindy.starks@verizon.net). Cindy provided a summary of recent conversations she had about the Diversion program and how it benefits youth in Arlington. Mary mentioned that she reached out to Jared at St. Eulalia's Church. They discussed safe social opportunities for youth currently offered at St. Eulalia's, including "Friday Night Drop In" for middle school youth and "Holy Dodge Ball". Jared is considering a Saturday drop in as well, but will need additional assistance with supervision. Youth services are open to all members of the community and are not religious based. Jared plans to attend the Coalition meeting next month.

- III. Public Underage Drinking- *Developing a protocol for community responses, enforcement & monitoring options:*** Karen and Cindy summarized concerns from last month's Coalition meeting regarding the issue of public underage drinking throughout Town, and acknowledged that these behaviors are likely to increase as the weather improves. Members discussed options for addressing this issue, as well as the potential impact on youth who choose to be in public locations where peers are drinking. Rich provided an update on APD protocol and confirmed that every call made to the station on this issue is acted on. Karen referred to the recent parent survey, in which many parents expressed concern over this topic. Of nearly 600 respondents, 90.6 % of parents indicated that they would support a local ordinance that would ban underage public intoxication. Coalition members also considered enforcement alternatives, including the importance of increasing education (ex. how early use impacts future path), raising awareness of healthy options and local resources already in place (Drop in Art Night), positive social norms (Above the Influence Campaign) and options for future recreational activities (ex. utilizing the Middle/High School for sport activities). Members agreed that it would be helpful to increase youth awareness of the variety of community offerings available to meet different interests. Students added that youth may not be aware of local resources, and acknowledged the importance of having trusted adults to turn to.

Students suggested activities that might appeal to their peers, including attending local sporting events, Karaoke and Open Mic Nights, and events similar to the recent ICA event (DJ, dancing, photo booth) and Battle of the Bands. Karen added that on June 5, 2013 there will be a second annual Teen Evening Concert on the lawn behind the Library. Karen stated that she will reach out to AHS students and will be the contact person for anyone interested in participating this year. More information on this event will be available next month.

IV. MA Medical Marijuana Draft Regulations: Christine provided an overview of proposed state and local regulations on medical marijuana. Christine commended MA Department of Public Health for their impressive efforts to draft comprehensive statewide regulations relating to the cultivation, distribution and possession of medical marijuana. The draft regulations include conditions requiring CORI checks for all dispensary agents, MA residency, licensure and in-state practice of all certifying physicians, MA residency of all qualifying patients, and additional physician and caregiver stipulations for all qualifying patients under the age of 18. DPH also clarified a “60 day supply” as being 10 ounces, unless otherwise recommended (with rationale) by a certifying physician.

With regard to Arlington, Christine informed the group that Town Meeting would be voting on two Warrant Articles (7 & 8), one a proposed zoning bylaw that would designate a specific, central area of Town for dispensaries to operate, and the other a temporary moratorium on dispensaries. The latter would allow for the Town to review the final DPH regulations and develop a reasonable local plan for the permitting and operation of dispensaries. Based on the draft DPH regulations, local Boards of Health will also be able to enforce and enact bylaw and local regulations. AYHSC members are encouraged to reach out to Town Meeting members you may know about this topic. Information about the draft DPH regulations can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/legal/med-marijuana/med-marijuana-propose-reg.pdf>. The public comment period on DPH draft regulations ends on 4/20/13.

V. Other Updates

- *Diversion Position-* Christine informed the group that DFC funding for the Diversion Coordinator position would be ending in September, and that, separately, Ellen Digby would be retiring from her position as Court/Home Liaison for the Arlington Public Schools. These changes created an opportunity to combine the two positions. Last month, Colleen presented to the School Committee on the Diversion Program and the proposed merging of the two positions. Principal Villano, Ellen Digby and Chief Ryan were also there to provide information in support of sustaining the Diversion program and merging the two jobs. Cindy S. reported that the presentation was well done and informative, resulting in the School Committee voting to fund a new, full time position. Given that this position will combine one full time and one part time position, ongoing evaluation will be warranted to determine if more support is needed in the future.
- *Parent Survey-* Cindy provided an update from the parent survey STAT, who convened to review and analyze findings, including open responses. The findings were very interesting and common themes were identified. The group will continue to break down the data and identify what messages will be highlighted. Members agreed on the importance of sharing this feedback with parents and the community.
- *Draft Letter to Coaches and Parents-* Rich informed the group that he, along with Cindy Curran, had attended a meeting last month for leaders of youth sports organizations. He credited Cindy for her efforts to educate the group on prevention initiatives, as well as for raising awareness about the Coalition (including the Coalition’s efforts to address public drinking). Lynn added that Coalition member, John Scheft wrote a follow-up letter to coaches addressing some of the issues raised at the meeting. The letter will be sent out soon to coaches, along with a request that they forward it to parents on their teams.
- *National Honors Society (NHS) Policies-* Karen stated that there are plans to rewrite AHS’s policy on student NHS membership. Policy changes will provide clarification on the behavioral parameters surrounding NHS membership, including on- and off- campus behavioral expectations outlined in the student handbook. Other schools that have NHS provide options for service work, such as tutoring. Students added that it would be useful to know more about the role of the National Honors Society and requirements for membership.

- *Parenting Programs*- Lynn informed the group that Calvary Church had expressed interest in hosting a parenting program like Navigating the Teen Years or Guiding Good Choices. Discussions are in progress to coordinate this. Cindy plans to offer a GGC program this spring.
- *Ottoson Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Administration*- Carlene stated that the YRBS administration will take place in June for 6-8th graders. Carlene will provide further information on volunteer needs as the date draws closer.

VI. Other Business:

High Times magazines were relocated to a less visible location after a Coalition member approached A&A management with concerns raised at last month's meeting. A&A staff expressed support for the mission of the Coalition, and were grateful that this matter was brought to their attention. A suggestion was made to send an expression of thanks as a follow up.

Captain Rich Flynn announced there would be a change in the School Resource Officer (SRO) position at Arlington High School. Ned Walsh was acknowledged for his commitment and tireless efforts as the current SRO. Multiple members expressed their gratitude- Kathy remarked on his responsiveness at the High School, and Jack expressed his appreciation for the hard work and pivotal role he played at the Ottoson Middle School. Rich stated that the SRO is an important and much needed position with expanding job responsibilities. As of 4/22/13, Ned Walsh will return to an Arlington Police Department (APD) assignment. Officer Stephen Porciello, a six-year veteran of the APD, will assume the SRO position at Arlington High School (AHS). Ellen Digby, the current Court/Home Liaison at AHS will provide training to Officer Porciello. Carlene suggested this might be a good time to write an article for Advocate, providing education on the role of the SRO position and connections within the community.

VII. Upcoming Trainings

4/8/13-4/26/13	"Can We Scare the Health into our Communities"	4 hour webinar	<u>Webinar</u> : participants may complete the course at their convenience between 4/8/13-4/26/13. CEUs available. http://healthimperatives.org/can-we-scare-health-our-communities-online-course
4/17/13	"Prevent Underage Drinking: Shape of the Solution"	2:00-3:15pm	<u>Webinar</u> : Discussion on evidence-based underage drinking prevention strategies. https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/inthenews.aspx#idAprilWebinar
4/19/13	MA Medical Marijuana Regulations	Boston 10:00am	Public Hearing- MDPH, Public Health Council Room, 250 Washington St., 2 nd floor, Boston, MA 02108
5/2/13	"Understanding and Preventing Adolescent Substance Abuse"	Westford 8:30am-2:00pm	Training- http://middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.com/events/story.php?event=42

Meeting Adjournment

- Next Coalition Meeting- May 16th, 2013